

The Builder.

No. CCCCVI.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 1850.



IF we were to give a full, true, and particular account of what took place on Saturday last, the 9th of November, when, as in Shakspeare's time and words,—

“London did pour out her citizens,
The mayor and all his brethren in best sort,”

commencing in the morning when the old lord and the new lord breakfasted together in Guildhall, and ending with notes of a quadrille in the council-chamber at the same place (after the banquet), amid a crowd composed of all sorts of men, from Lord John down to a “good apprentice,” wherein Tom Brown and John Jones (and ever may it be so) rubbed shoulders with her Majesty's ministers,* and inwardly resolved to achieve the same position themselves, seeing that it only needs a strong determination and a *little* luck,—some of our readers might say we were travelling out of our right-lined path into flowery meads for our own enjoyment rather than their information. Therefore we will not do it. We will not tell how, paraphrasing a rhyme of an early time,—

“Selected citizens, i' th' morning ell,
At ten o'clock did meet in old Guildhall:”

we will say nothing of the marshalling of the procession, the “progress” to Westminster, through dense crowds piled up to house-tops, or of the dinner, as a dinner, with its blaze of lights, clanging trumpets, barons of beef served from high pulpits, strong speeches, and the “loving-cup,” with Gog and Magog in Barbaric splendour looking down grimly on the whole. It is, nevertheless, a wonderful sight, this dinner, and would lead most persons to agree with Thomas Middleton, who wrote the “*Triumphs of Truth*,” in 1613, that—“Search all chronicles, histories, and records, in what language or letter soever—let the inquisitive man waste the deere treasure of his time and eyesight—he shall conclude his life only in this certainty, that there is no subject upon earth received into the place of his government with the like state and magnificence as is the Lord Maior of the City of London.”

All this, however, we let pass: but having been so fortunate as to lead the City authorities to attempt an improvement of the Mayor's “*Sliding*,” or “*Show*,” we should be wanting in our duty—that is, to ourselves—if we omitted to record the fact. The suggestions printed in page 493 were referred by the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs' Committee to Mr. Bunning, the energetic city architect, and he called in to his assistance Mr. F. Fenton and Mr. Batty, by whom the representations suggested were carried out.† We should be wrong if we said it was done as well as it could be: the parties engaged upon it would not say so: the time was short, the matter novel: but it was, never-

theless, very well done, entitled those who did it to thanks, and gave general pleasure to the countless thousands who witnessed the procession. Next year it will, doubtless, be improved, and made fully “accordant with the ancient character of the show, and worthy of the present time.” Amongst the few accidents that occurred at starting, the emblems of Art were ominously disrupted by the jerking of the horse that bore them, and Minerva, who surmounted them, descended from her high place as if despising an artificial elevation. On the return, however, this was set right.

The want of a new thoroughfare in the city was strongly felt on that day, and those who are careless about enlarging the mouth of Chancery-lane, if they had been fixed there for half an hour, as we were, on that morning, might have been stirred to exertion. The necessity for alteration on Ludgate-hill, too, where it opens into St. Paul's churchyard, was seen: and we hope, by the way, relative to this much-needed improvement, that it will not be forgotten that the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's have expressed their willingness to open the area in front of the cathedral when this approach is widened. We hope soon to hear of something being done inside St. Paul's: the windows should be filled with stained glass, the paintings in the dome renovated, and the walls adorned with colourings. If the leading artists of England were to offer now, as they did many years ago, to decorate the interior of the cathedral gratuitously, the offer would probably not be refused. The present dean has a fine opportunity to connect his name worthily with the building, and will, we hope, avail himself of it. The fore-court will very shortly be opened to the public during the day. On Saturday the custodians made (fairly) a rich harvest by admitting spectators within the rails, all glad enough to escape the pressure from without. In an adjacent street some jugglers and rope-dancers were quietly practising their art, and recalled to us an incident described by Leland in his record of a triumphal passage through the city in February 1546-7. The account, as quoted by Mr. J. G. Nichols, in his “*London Pageants*,” says:—“There was a rope as great as the cable of a ship stretched from the battlements of St. Paul's steeple, and fastened to a great anchor, which was fixed near the gate of the Dean's house. When the king approached, a man appeared (who was a foreigner, a native of Arragon) lying on the rope; and with his head foremost, throwing his arms and legs out, he slid down on his breast from the battlements to the ground, as it had been an arrow from a bow. He came to the king, and kissed his Majesty's foot; and so after a few words had passed, ran up the rope again until he came over the midst of the church-yard, where, having a rope about him, he played certain mysteries on the said rope, as tumbling and casting one leg from another; or, as Holinshed expresses it, ‘*played many prettie toies*.’ He then tied himself to the cable by the right leg ‘a little beneath the wrist of the

foot,’ and having so hung for a time recovered himself and came down.”

Three hundred years, it will be seen, have effected very little improvement in rope-dancing and the *corde volante*. These same words would serve to describe the most recent efforts of the kind at Vauxhall or “Astley's.”

When we got on to Blackfriars-bridge,—which, by the way, is scarcely in a condition to be trusted with such a load as it then bore,—we could look at nothing but an enormous chimney, which has sprung up in Thames-street, close by, and serves sadly to mar the view of St. Paul's, which before was so good here. It belongs to a steam flour-mill of great extent, and, considered by itself, seems an excellent piece of work: in its position, however, it is most injurious.*

We must return to Guildhall, to give Mr. Bunning praise for the improvement which he contemplates to effect in the adornment of the Hall and the adjacent chambers, for state days. The novelty on the present occasion was a charming collection of sculpture, in the shape of statues and bas-reliefs, appropriately placed. Mr. Carew contributed a statue of Sir Robert Peel, a fine work of art, but, as it seemed to us, not a good likeness. Mr. Calder Marshall sent the “*First Whisper of Love*” (a repetition of his work under that name, purchased by the Art-Union of London), the “*Aurora and Zephyr*,” “*Sabrina*,” and others: and Mr. Weekes, his statue of Lord Wellesley, and some excellent busts, especially one of Allan Cunningham. Painting and sculpture have been heretofore wholly neglected by the Corporation. Surely they could contrive to devote, say 500*l.* a-year, for the encouragement of art and artists at the same time that they worthily adorned their meeting-rooms, they might thus foster talent, and set up suggesters of good thoughts and prompters to great deeds,—rich heir-looms for their successors.

Here is another opportunity for the present chief magistrate to begin a good work. A consideration for Art is on the rise in the city, notwithstanding the ominous fall of Minerva.

COPYISM IN ARCHITECTURE.*

I am always proud to answer your call for a contribution to your miscellany of architectural discussion. But in the present instance you give me too short notice for any attempt more formidable than a general gossip on some subject which comes prominently to hand.

And the first subject which occurs to me is our old theme of Copyism, as lately discussed by Messrs. Pugin, Scott, and Fergusson in the columns of *THE BUILDER*. It was only a little time ago that I first heard of this famous tournament; for, however strange the confession may appear, I had positively not seen my old friend *THE BUILDER* for months, till one afternoon lately I got hold of the file for a year, and plunged over head and ears into it for the rest of the day. I could not but feel surprised at the altered tone of the defenders of Copyism in this case—indeed, the entirely altered ground which is assumed. The question is one of Gothic architecture alone, in the first place. For the once universal “*authority*” of the classic standards there seems to be no one to advance a word! There was an opening, as I think, for the Orders, every one of them, to edge themselves into the dispute, but not an order was ever mentioned—the fight was altogether for revived Mediaevalism. Secondly,

* This chimney rises about 150 feet above the building to which it belongs: the latter is about 80 feet high, making a total of 250 feet. The external diameter of the shaft, where it starts above the top of the building, is, we are told, 12 feet 6 inches: the top diameter, 8 feet: the cap sails over nearly to the extent of the bottom diameter. The internal diameter of the flue is 8 feet, at bottom. The building is seven stories in height, a body fire-proof being formed of girders and iron joints, carried on iron columns from top to bottom.

* Read at a Meeting of the Architectural Association, Nov. 1, 1849.

* We ourselves “bumped” the Lord Chancellor in the course of a satirical effort, and ought to apologise for the same. (Such bumping conducive to the safety, the greatness, and the glory of England.)

† The following is a description of the pageant that was introduced:—Two pages. France (personified by a young woman attired in a white robe, with wings, bearing in her right hand the olive branch, mounted on a white palfrey), having in her train Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, represented by male and female equestrians, clad in national costume, illustrating the four quarters of the globe. Two pages. House of Europe (supporting the arms of the nation, emblazoned on a shield). Two angels, conducting the Chancel of the Anasitic nation and arms. Two pages. Two negroes, conducting the elephant of Africa (supporting a device, formed of the palm tree, various birds and

fruits, together with the colours of the nation). Two pages. Indians, conducting two deer of America (supporting symbols). Two pages, conducting a horse, bearing attributes of industry, the beehive, and agricultural implements. Two pages, conducting the horse, bearing attributes of art—sculpture and emblem of the fine arts. Two pages, conducting the horse bearing attributes of Commerce—a ship in full sail over a globe, anchor, &c. Two pages, conducting the horse bearing attributes of Manufactures, machinery, &c. An allegorical car, drawn by six cream-coloured horses, the car representing a state barge, moved by four, trifling and dolphins at its stern, in their centre, bearing a tall column, with Barons and Heralds, surrounded by young ladies, allegorically robed: the former at the foot, and the latter seated on a throne on the summit of the globe, bearing symbols of Peace.